

***PSYCHOLOGY'S USE AND REPRESENTATION OF THE THREE
CULTURES IN UNDERSTANDING HUMAN NATURE: History,
Perspectives and Portraits***

*Rosalyn M. King, Ed.D., Professor of Psychology and Chair, VCCS Center for Teaching Excellence
Northern Virginia Community College, Loudoun Campus, Sterling, VA 20164
roking@nvcc.edu or 703-450-2629, USA -All Rights Reserved-*

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PSYCHOLOGY'S USE AND REPRESENTATION OF THE THREE CULTURES IN UNDERSTANDING HUMAN NATURE: *History, Perspectives and Portraits*

Abstract

In this paper and presentation, I attempt to illustrate how psychology has represented the 3 cultures due to its unique evolutionary history and interdisciplinary beginnings. The discussion begins with an overview of the controversy from the perspectives of C.P. Snow (*The Two Cultures*, 1959) and Jerome Kagan (*The Three Cultures*, 2009). A historical overview of the evolution of psychology and the interdisciplinary backgrounds of its contributors is presented outlining the specific contributions made from ancient Egypt to the late 19th century. Perspectives of schools and subfields embracing the interdisciplinary focus are presented. Portraits of particular psychological scientists who have integrated perspectives from across the three cultures are highlighted, along with key concepts and principles. Finally a discussion of implications and future directions for psychology is explored.

Introduction

Three Cultures: Controversy and Tension

More than 6 decades ago, C.P. Snow claimed there is a tension and breakdown of communication between the natural sciences, the arts and humanities, and religion. Further, he claims the quality of education is on the decline and few trained scientists are well versed in other subjects to broaden their perspective. Few read works outside of their discipline.

In 2009, Jerome Kagan responds to Snow's work by conducting his own assessment and analysis of the 3 cultures and their status since Snow's claims. Kagan agrees. The cultures still take on different perspectives and approaches to the meaning of truth. Natural scientists rely on intuition and social scientists seek to understand a phenomenon or a problem.

Kagan outlines the major obstacles for each culture and their strengths. Kagan also agrees to the

tensions outlined by Snow decades ago. Moreover, he claims that an even wider gulf exists today, including the status hierarchy. (See *Figure 1.1, Hierarchy of the Three Cultures*).

Kagan recommends how each culture can improve. He illustrates for example, how the discipline of Art could be stronger by knowing more subject matter from other disciplines.

Kagan stresses the importance and need for more interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary collaboration and teaching. Greater mutuality and understanding is needed among the members of the cultures.

He ends his assessment with an analogy for each of the cultures: *"It is time for the members of the three cultures to adopt a posture of greater humility for, like tigers, sharks, and hawks, each group is potent in its own territory but impotent in the territory of the other."* (p.275)

Psychology as a Separate Science

Historically, psychology has been viewed as a separate science apart from the social sciences due to its unique interdisciplinary nature and collaborations. Present day psychology has developed on the fringe of the natural and social sciences.

Recognition as a Science

While more popularly known for its therapeutic aspects and perhaps for "pop" psychology, psychology has regained its recognition as a science—from the National Association for the Advancement of the Sciences and the National Science Foundation, among other organizations of science.

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Paradigm, Methodology and Scope

There is no set paradigm in psychology and multiple methodologies. Psychology is interdisciplinary and global.

Historical Evolution and Interdisciplinary Focus

Psychology is a young science only becoming a separate discipline from philosophy in the late 19th century. It was originally in the sub branch called *mental philosophy*.

History traces contributions to psychology's evolution by scientists and philosophers with interdisciplinary interests and backgrounds. Beginning in early Egypt and Greece and moving across the world, scholars made unique contributions and theoretical explanations about human nature.

Perspectives: Schools and Subfields Embracing Integrated Analyses

Evolutionary Psychology draws from all disciplines to understand changes in human nature over time. (See Figure 3.1, Evolutionary Psychology and its Interdisciplinary Focus.)

Comparative Psychology evolved in the late 19th century as a result of the confluence of evolutionary biology and experimental psychology. Today, biologists, anthropologists, ecologists, geneticists and others contribute to the field. (See Figure 3.2, Overview of Comparative Psychology.)

The Cognitive Sciences have been evolving from the beginning of philosophy and epistemology. The field has made as its goal, understanding the nature of mind and human knowledge. Computer science, artificial intelligence and robotics are direct outgrowths from the scientific advances and theories derived in the cognitive sciences. (See Figure 3.2, Overview of the Cognitive Sciences.)

Quantum Physics and Quantum Psychology has been emerging since the 1900s. Physics has always been an integral part of psychology from its early beginnings. Quantum physics illustrates how everything in the Universe, in all dimensions of life and reality ultimately consist of "Quanta" or energy. This energy also pervades everything and is integral to everything in existence. It is considered living mind, living consciousness. Everything in the Universe has its being within this infinite intelligent energy. Today, physicists and psychologists collaboratively explore the realm and dimensions of quanta. (See Figure 3.4 for an overview of Quantum Physics and Quantum Psychology.)

Energy Medicine and Energy Psychology is in the domain of complementary and alternative medicine and uses a variety of techniques in psychological and physical healing. The National Institutes of Health's National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM) is in the forefront developing strategies and techniques, conducting clinical trials and designing empirical methodologies to test the healing impacts, successes and failures from energy medicine approaches.

Psychologists and medical doctors are increasingly moving into the field and practice of energy medicine, combining their understanding of medicine and psychology to heal mind and body. Professionals include individuals such as *Dr. Deepak Chopra, Dr. Norman Shealy, Dr. Caroline Myss, Dr. Joan Borysenko*, and many others. (See Figure 3.5 for an overview of energy medicine and psychology.)

Portraits of Scientists Using Integrated Approaches

Carl Jung

Carl Jung is considered one of the greatest contributors to the field of psychology because of his depth and breadth of understanding and interdisciplinary knowledge. Considered a healer of souls and a healer of the culture—"an efficient servant of humanity that the world has seldom

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seen." Jung had an interdisciplinary background and training across the three cultures. He has written a wide variety of treatises on the nature of the psyche from all perspectives.

Jung developed **depth and analytical psychology** and the search for individuation and wholeness.

Jung used his religious and spiritual understanding, and his knowledge of world religions to analyze the psyche of man. He also studied the teachings of the **Gnostics** (the knowledgeable ones) to understand the unconscious processes of the psyche and individuation. He outlines the Gnostic nature of the human soul and its path toward wholeness.

Jung was a scholar of **alchemy**. He understood chemistry and applied it to psychology and paralleled the chemical process to a psychological alchemy of transformation of the psyche—from darkness into light.

Jung was an **artist and literary scholar**. He wrote a treatise on the role and importance of literary scholars and artists to understand the concepts set forth in psychology to aid in the creative productivity and greater depth of their work.

William James

James moved across the three cultures to develop his Gifford lectures and publication on ***The Varieties of Religious Experience***, analyzing pathology, neurology, and healthy-mindedness.

James outlines in great detail the outlooks and paths of the sick soul and the healthy soul. He performed this pioneering work in hopes of the development of a science of religion.

James also developed the theory of emotion outlining the organic/physiological basis of emotional expression.

James contributed much to the field of cognitive science with his careful delineation of the streams of consciousness and school of functional thinking.

Howard Gardner

Gardner is a revolutionary thinker and scholar, a cognitive developmental psychologist and has a wide interdisciplinary background.

Gardner created a scientific revolution with his theory about the expanded intellectual capabilities of man—**the theory of multiple intelligences**, with nine empirically-based intelligences.

Gardner has conducted wide-range research investigating the **content of the mind**: how minds develop; how they break down; how they are organized; and how they change and can be changed in productive directions.

He has conducted more than 20 years of work and **research in neuroscience and neuropsychology**, studying and understanding the minds of brain-damaged individuals.

Gardner provides a model for the ethical responsibility of the scientist to the public and to the academy.

He stresses the importance of seeking deeper understanding and meaning in one's discipline rather than simply knowing and repeating the facts.

Gardner acknowledges the importance of interdisciplinary study to broaden understanding and for preparation for living in a global world.

Implications and Future Directions

The new training mandates will dictate that psychology become more widely interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary in the future.

Multidisciplinary research teams could contribute a more thorough understanding of human and animal nature.

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Future students and professionals of psychology will be prepared for work in the global world and there will be a promotion of increasing international exchanges.

The field of psychology and its careers will continue to grow.

Many psychological scientists continue to work collaboratively and across the cultures.

Technology and improved methodologies for scientific studies has advanced the field and must continue to build upon these advances.

Psychology is one of the largest and most rapidly growing disciplines today remaining a hub science.

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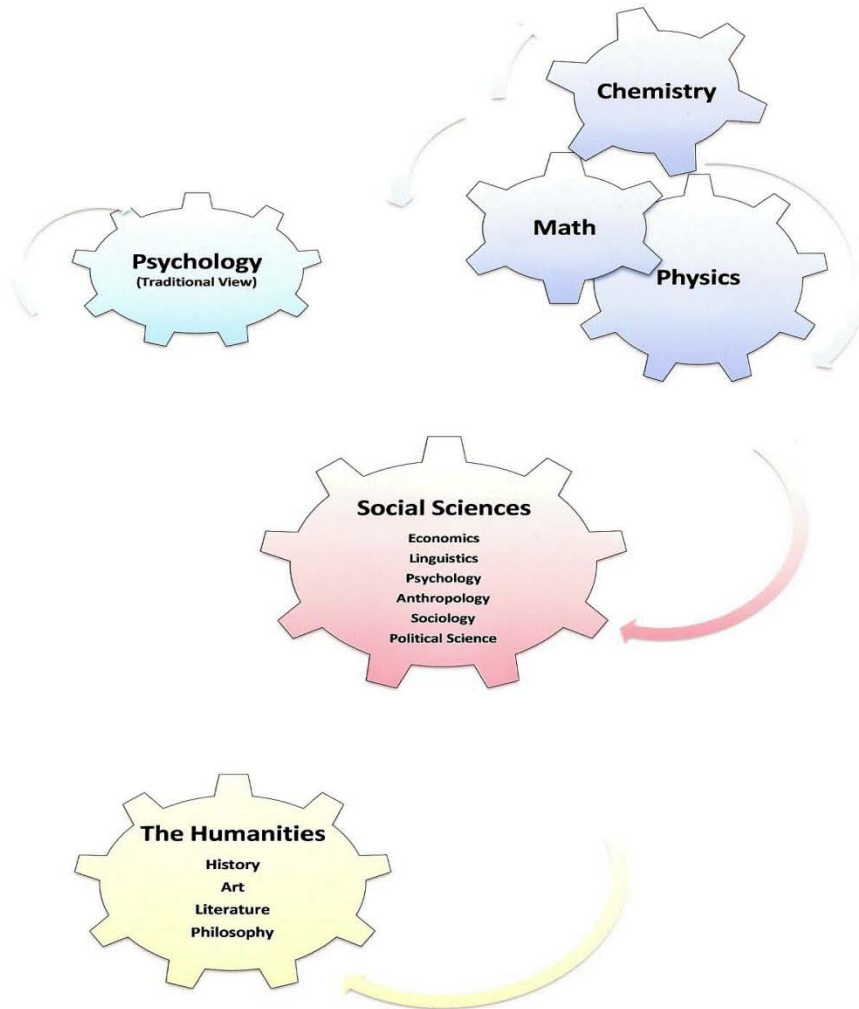
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Figure 1.1 Hierarchy of the Three Cultures



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Figure 2.1 Historical Contributions to an Integrated Psychology



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Figure 2.1 Historical Contributions to an Integrated Psychology



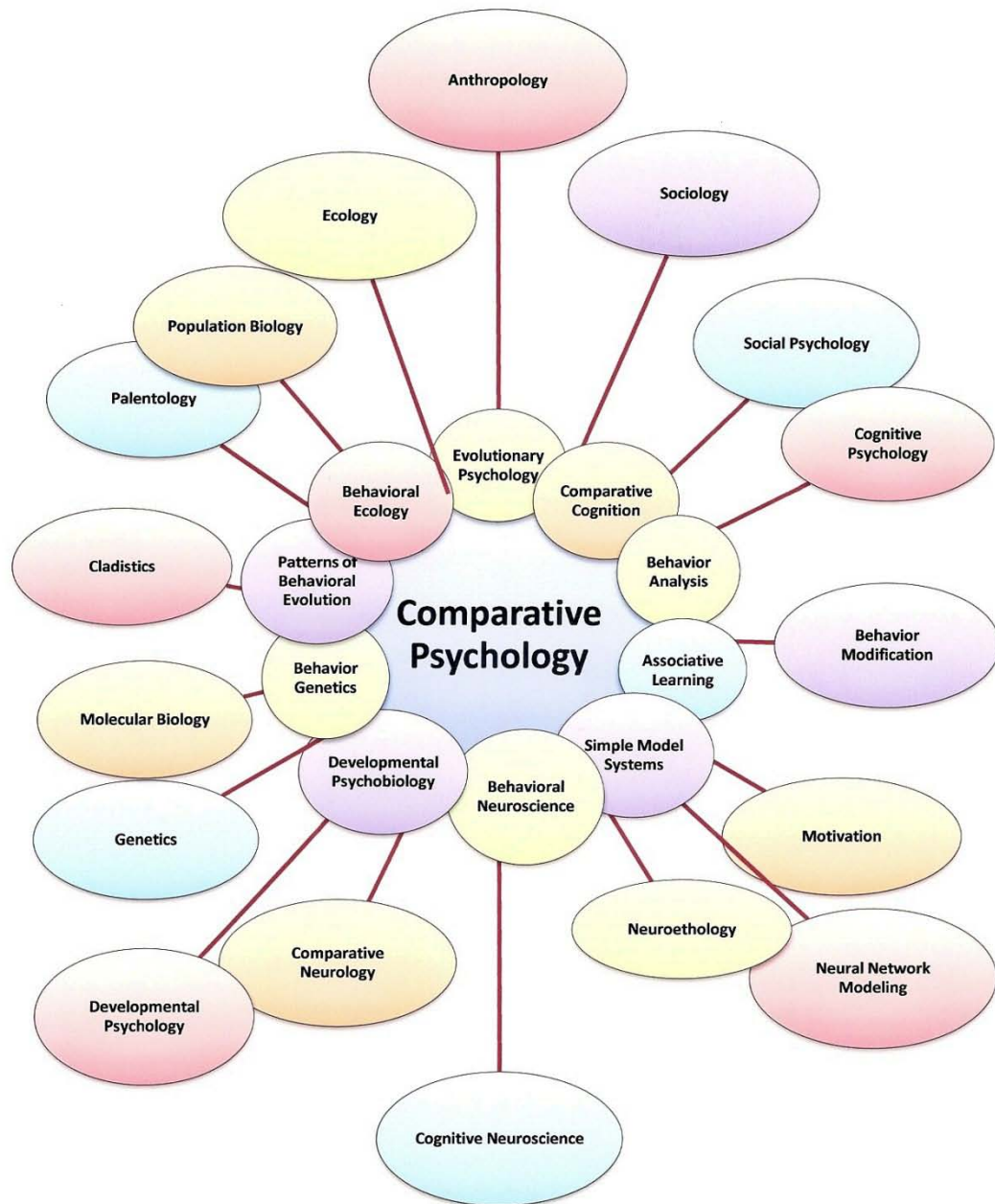
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Figure 3.1 Evolutionary Psychology and its Interdisciplinary Focus



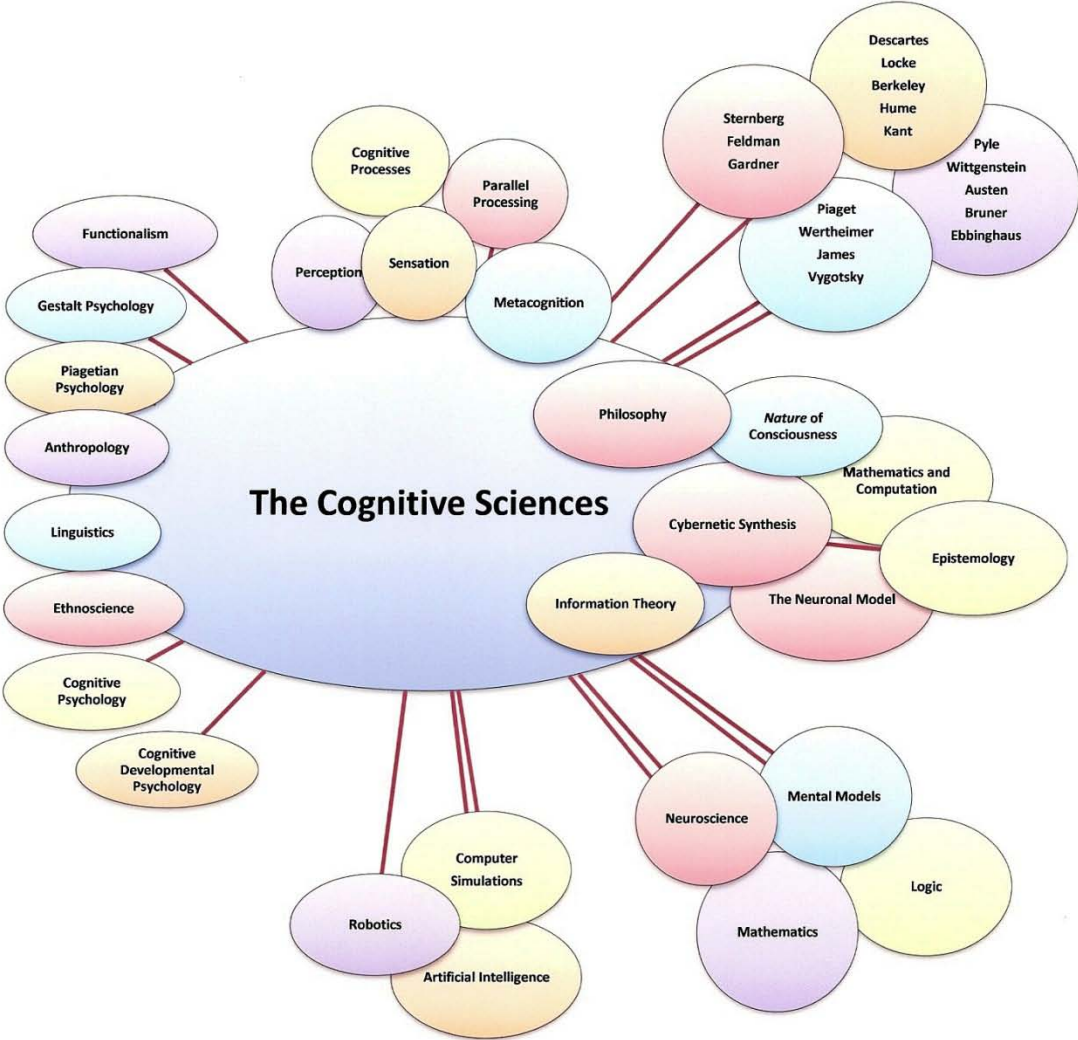
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Figure 3.2 Overview of Comparative Psychology



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Figure 3.3 Overview of the Cognitive Sciences



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Figure 3.4 Overview of Quantum Physics and Quantum Psychology



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Figure 3.5 Overview of Energy Medicine and Energy Psychology

